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ABSTRACT

Written by a Director of Special Education working for an elementary school district in a small midwestern town, this practicum aimed to improve the special education delivery system in that district. A review of the literature and a survey of district needs indicated that: (1) teachers relied on a refer-test-place cycle when alternatives would have been more appropriate; (2) systematic, individualized feedback was a preferred method of staff development; (3) principals relied on pull-out programs instead of extending regular education options; and (4) parents of handicapped children often were unaware of available services and programs. Goals of the practicum were to enhance the special education delivery system through the development and implementation of five consultation strategies. Teachers were provided a checklist of alternative options for testing. Guidelines were provided to principals to enable them to be active participants in the referral process. A process of new student identification was implemented for auxiliary staff. A brochure that described services available to handicapped students and families was developed and distributed to parents. A video presentation was developed for parents of students entering a junior high school program. Evaluation data indicated the effectiveness of the intervention. Checklists and other related material are appended. (RH)

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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSULTATION STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEM SPECIAL EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND PARENTS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

BY

PATRICIA S. MIRSKY

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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSULTATION STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND PARENTS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Patricia S. Mirsky

Cluster 20

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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1988

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Patricia S. Mirsky under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

5-3-88
Date of Final Approval of Report

JoEllen Salce Rogers
JoEllen Salce Rogers, Ph.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

The Implementation of Consultation Strategies to Improve Communication Between Special Educators and Teachers, Principals, and Parents at the Elementary Level. Mirsky, Patricia S., 1988: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.
Descriptors: Special Education / Teacher Education / Faculty Development / Auxiliary Staff / Information Dissemination

This practicum addressed the need for improving the special education delivery system by increasing communication between special educators and teachers, principals, auxiliary staff, and parents at the elementary school level. In a review of the literature and a survey of the needs of the Practicum School District, the writer found that 1) teachers relied on a refer-test-place cycle when other alternatives would be more appropriate, 2) systematic, individualized feedback is a preferred method of staff development, 3) principals, who are key people in service implementation, have relied on pull-out programs instead of extending regular education options, and 4) although schools are providing services to handicapped children, parents often are unaware of available services and programs.

The writer's goals were to enhance and to promote the special education delivery system through the development and implementation of the following consultation strategies: 1) providing teachers with a checklist of alternative options for testing, 2) providing guidelines so that principals could become active participants in the referral process, 3) implementing a process of new student identification for auxiliary staff, 4) developing and distributing a brochure to parents describing services available to handicapped students and families, and 5) developing a video presentation for parents of students entering a junior high school program.

As a result of the Practicum: 1) when given alternatives, testing referrals and subsequent placement decreased, 2) principals became active participants in the referral process, 3) two-way communication increased between special educators and auxiliary staff, and 4) parents became more aware of services available.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Practicum Setting

The community is located seven miles northwest from the center of a large city in the midwest. According to the 1980 census 12,641 persons lived within this small community's five-square-mile boundaries. Although it is literally surrounded by the major city, the town has its own police department, fire department, water works, public library, parks department, public school system, and town board. For the past 57 years, the town board has appointed the school board. In November 1985, there was a referendum to change to an elected school board, but the proposal for direct election was defeated 1,589 to 937 in favor of keeping the present system.

The town has four public elementary schools. Each school is numbered in accordance to when it was built and each is named after one of the four businessmen who were active in the town's early development. The community has one Junior High School and one Senior High School. Based on figures reported in the 1985 School Statistical Report, the total school population, kindergarten through twelfth grade, was 1,307.5.

The school system is unique in that it practices the neighborhood concept. The system owns no buses nor do they have lunch programs in the elementary schools. The school system does not accept federal

funds for local programs and the school board does not encourage teachers to participate in funded programs. The school system has no paid aides nor para-professionals.

The school system has several itinerant teachers who provide services to all four elementary schools. These services include music, physical education, reading laboratory, art, speech and language, learning disabilities, and psychometric services. There is one school nurse and there are no elementary school counselors nor are there any social workers school-wide.

Historically, the community has been one of single-dwelling residences with stable family units. Many teachers are residents of the community. Several teachers have taught the parents of their present students.

However, in keeping with the national trend, over the past few years more children are living with single parents or in extended families, more mothers are working outside the home, the transient school population is on the increase as people are moving into one of the town's three apartment complexes, and the latch key population continues to grow.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

The writer joined the school system in 1972 as its first school psychometrist. In 1980, due to licensure changes in the state, the license was converted to that of school psychologist. Also in 1980, the writer obtained the Director of Special Education license. This second license was sought by the writer and, although it carries some administrative responsibilities, staff-line chain of command remains unclear.

The school psychologist is a member of a diagnostic team that is responsible for all new referrals and three-year re-evaluations for the school system. Specific responsibilities as a team member include: a) taking a family history during a personal interview; b) administering individual tests; c) writing psychometric reports; and d) interpreting all results at an initial case conference. The school psychologist shares responsibilities with other team members pertaining to classroom observations, chairing case conferences, and writing original individual education plans.

As Director of Special Education the job goal is to provide appropriate education programs for all mildly or high-incidence handicapped students residing within the community. Primary responsibilities include: a) implementing appropriate procedures to meet Federal and State requirements relative to mandated statutes; b) interviewing and recommending to the Superintendent applicants for appointment; c) coordinating appropriate placement of all qualified pupils in special education; and d) acting as a liaison between local

programs and the cooperative which provides programs for low-incidence handicapped students.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

There has been poor communication between special education personnel and significant others at the elementary level, specifically new teachers, principals, auxiliary staff, and parents. If this deficiency had been rectified, the special education delivery system would have become more effective. New teachers have been uninformed about services available to them and, therefore, have been unable to obtain appropriate support. They relied heavily on an inappropriate refer-test-place cycle for seeking assistance. During the 1985-86 school year, four new teachers were hired at the elementary level and, during the 1986-87 school year, four more new teachers were hired at this level. In a school system with less than 1800 students, this was a significant number of new teachers.

Building principals appear to have been inconsistent in their support of special education services. Guidelines and direction were needed so that they could be more knowledgeable as they took an active and supportive role in the testing process. The school system had four elementary school principals, one for each of the elementary schools.

Auxiliary staff, which included music, art, and physical education teachers, normally were a part of a diagnostic team for newly-identified handicapped students. Accordingly, they were able to

plan for these students in their mainstreamed environments based on the information from their original input. However, there was no operational procedure that identified transfer students to the supporting staff. During the 1985-86 school year, 18 transfer students were enrolled; during the 1986-87 school year 14 transfer students were enrolled. In order to continue to give quality service to all students, an efficient system needed to be developed so that auxiliary staff had appropriate information regarding all special education students assigned to them. The school system had a total of 6 auxiliary staff assigned to the elementary schools: 1 music teacher, 2 art teachers, and 3 physical education teachers.

Case conference committees met regularly to develop individual education plans (IEP) for handicapped students. Parents of non-handicapped students were not cognizant of the continuum of services offered to the handicapped nor of the school policy of least restrictive environment. Parents of handicapped students needed to be assured that services remain available as their children progress through school. As taxpayers, all parents needed to be apprised of the range of services and programs available so that they could support the concepts of special education and mainstreaming.

The word-of-mouth communication that has served the established community well in the past was no longer efficient or reliable. Effective communication needed to be developed and implemented so that building principals could increase their competencies in supporting the special education delivery system and so that new teachers, auxiliary staff, and parents could better utilize the special services

available to them.

Problem Documentation

A review of the school psychologist's files over the 1985-86 school year showed that referrals of psychometric testing may have been requested unnecessarily or inappropriately. For example, a total of 13 students were started through an evaluation process; 4 of the 13 moved before the process was completed; they were not case conferenced. At the completion of testing, 3 of the remaining 9 were retained; a perception home program was set up for 1 of these 3 students, and she later attended a summer reading program; the other 2 students were enrolled in the school's reading program. Of the remaining 6 students, one student and his family went to outside counseling; classroom modifications were made for 3 students, one of whom received glasses and attended the summer reading program, and, finally, no action was taken on 2 of the 13 students. All of these decisions could have been made without testing. Staff continued to look to testing of a student as the first alternative for intervention, when parent conferencing or checking into school resources have been more appropriate. Testing was still being sought to determine eligibility for promotion when daily class work, student records, and parent conferences may have been sufficient for arriving at an informed decision.

A survey of new teachers indicated that none were aware of the procedure for having a student tested. Unless teachers are advised of specific policies and are acquainted with various procedures, they will be unable to participate in programs or services available to them

and their students.

A review of the records demonstrated the need to establish a measure of accountability for building principals as they participate in the referral process. Records showed that each elementary principal was part of the case conference committee within his or her building. However, during the 1985-86 school year, no principal was able to sign the Learning Disabilities Eligibility form, because none had beenan active participant in the diagnostic procedure.

A review of the records and consultation with auxiliary staff showed that there were no procedures in place that identified special education students to these teachers. Of the 6 teachers, 5 were itinerant; at that time, there was no uniform or consistent way these teachers were given information regarding any of the special students with whom they worked.

An informal interview with the Superintendent of Schools indicated the need for developing and implementing a systematic method for the dissemination of special education information to parents and school personnel.

Causative Analysis

Insufficient Teacher Training Programs

Although the least restrictive environment concept of mainstreaming has been strongly advocated at the federal, state, and local levels, new teachers often have not been prepared for the wide range of abilities and disabilities displayed by the students in their classrooms. Consequently, when a problem did arise, a first "solution" was to have the student tested. This kicked in the refer-test-place

cycle which may not have been necessary nor appropriate. At the national level, special education departments were being cautioned that non-handicapped students were receiving services that should have been provided by regular education. At the local level, it appeared that a teacher was asking for assistance in the only way he or she knew how to ask. New teachers needed to be made aware of and encouraged to use other options rather than to have relied on a testing program that may not have been necessary.

Lack of Leadership Resulting in Unclear Responsibilities

A few years ago a screening process was initiated for the primary purpose of reducing referrals. Although this procedure was discussed at an administrative meeting, it was not written down and presented as policy. There were few follow-up meetings to reinforce the agreed-upon routine. Consequently, the procedure slowly broke down with principals reverting to rubber-stamping referral requests rather than being active participants in the process. The procedure needed to be rejuvenated and supported by central office. Principals needed to take more of an active supporting role in the procedures for testing referrals.

Transient Special Education Population

A total of 34 elementary learning disabled students were provided services during the 1985-1986 school year. Of these 34, only 15 started the 1986-1987 school year. As of February 1987, 27 learning disabled students had been enrolled in the program.

Eight mildly mentally handicapped students had been case conferenced in the Spring of 1985 to start the 1985-1986 school year in

the Fall. Only six students arrived and three of these withdrew before the closing of the school year. Five mildly mentally handicapped students were case conferenced for the Fall of the 1986-1987 school year. By February 1987, three students transferred into the system and two had withdrawn.

Changing Community

The word-of-mouth communication that had served our school community in the past was no longer efficient or reliable. Teachers needed to be aware of options available to them as well as how to obtain assistance when needed. Parents of newly-identified handicapped children needed to be assured that a range of services were available now as well as in the future as their children progressed through school.

The Related Literature

The implementation of Public Law 94-142 (the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975) has made a profound impact on the delivery of special education services in the public schools. Improved practices for identifying and accommodating students with special learning needs and the development of instructional objectives with emphasis on individual differences were only a few of the impressive achievements stemming from the implementaion of this legislation (Will, 1984).

However, a decade later, it was time to re-examine where we needed to put our emphasis. According to many concerned (Will 1984; Wang, 1985; Gartner, 1986; White & Calhoun 1987), it was then time to review the direct service education model that had been created

and to think in terms of modifying or refining it. Alternative systems needed to be explored. One primary concern was that, at the time, too many students were being identified for special education direct services who could have been better served in a regular class environment. By referring socially unskilled and difficult-to-manage children for special education placement, regular educators were constructing homogeneous classes of regular students (Gresham, Elliot & Black, 1987). According to Graden, Casey & Christenson (1985) a prereferral intervention service based on a consultation model was needed.

Gartner (1986) recognized that the present system often made it easy for students to slide into special education services when other options might have been more appropriate. Madeleine C. Will, the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U. S. Department of Education, stated that collaboration among human services delivery systems is a must (Will, 1984). She stated a concern regarding the interrelationship of regular and special education. She viewed the present delivery system as artificially compartmentalized, with special education direct services often seen as the only option for some students with special needs. She advocated that school systems be creative in combining the responsibilities of special and regular education so as to encourage increased flexibility for inclusion of special needs students in regular educaton programs (Will, 1984).

Gartner (1986) discussed the problems that state departments of

education have created in the attempt to legislate and administer P.L. 94-142 at the local level. Specifically, he referred to the state of New York where the referral system presently encourages the overabundance of inappropriate referrals and subsequent inappropriate placement. There was no procedure in place that involved the building principal in the referral process nor was there any planned intervention to maintain a student in general education prior to referral (Gartner, 1986). It was the consensus of many that inappropriate referrals could be decreased by implementing a prereferral process (Graden, Casey & Christenson 1985; Gartner, 1986).

A second method for serving more students in the mainstream of regular education was to increase consultation services. Although Public Law 94-142 promoted the education of handicapped individuals in the least restrictive environment, regular classroom teachers have had few if any college classes, preservice, or inservice that would have assisted them in teaching special education students (Sesow & Adams, 1982; Ganshow, Weber, & Davis, 1984). Resource teachers commonly saw their primary role as one working directly with students. Consequently, there was a real need for cooperation and communication between regular and special educators. Dalke (1984) stated that the two groups needed to confer regularly. The classroom teacher needed information, such as academic, perceptual, and affective levels, and it was the responsibility of the special education teacher to convey this information. Swedmark (1979) promoted two-way communication. The lack of time, the extensive amount of paperwork, and the lack of preparation in consulting skills were cited by resource teachers as

reasons for not providing needed consultation services (Haight, 1984).

According to Wang, Vaughan and Dytman (1985) characteristics of effective staff development included programs adapted to the needs and interests of individual staff, strong support from central office and building administration, and active and systematic participation of affected personnel.

It appeared that teachers preferred individual integrated staff development over large group sessions. They preferred active rather than passive involvement and they liked the opportunity to demonstrate skills as well as having the opportunity for having feedback from supervisors. The consensus seemed to be that teachers did better with frequent and continuous support from administration. Regular teachers who had been successful in working with handicapped students were those who had viewed individual differences as the norm rather than the exception. Sesow and Adams (1982) reported that teachers perceptions of their own competency affected their attitude in working with the mainstreamed student. Positive attitudes were fostered by special education courses, having worked with special education students during their student teaching experience, and by having had a handicapped friend or family member.

After doing 25 indepth case studies, Biklen (1985) noted that those regular teachers who complained most loudly that they were not prepared to work with the handicapped student, were the same ones who resisted taking advantage of any inservice training programs available to them. Sesow and Adams (1982) found that teachers were unwilling to commit themselves to taking special education courses after

graduation, even though they admitted that they saw the need. Mills (1979) recognized that some teachers were fearful of working with handicapped students. Orientation and training sessions were recommended for the inexperienced teacher. Biklen (1985) noted that teachers who were willing to experiment and to be involved in change were the most likely to take advantage of training and consultation services offered. Those teachers who felt they were part of a common mission, those who shared goals and means of reaching those goals were the ones who were successful. Principals who fostered an open school climate were found to be most effective in implementing programs (Hargrove, 1981). Raiser (1987) described a university program where first-year teachers came back to campus and shared their first-hand experiences with preservice teachers. A continuing teacher-consultant cadre was then formed, which served as a support system.

Hargrove (1981) recognized the uneveness of talent among principals in implementing strategies and suggested that special education teachers who had good consultation skills be placed in schools with problems. A major barrier between regular education administrators and special education staff as identifed by Hargrove (1981) was that principals often saw implementation of special education programs as the responsibility of special educators; however, the latter lacked the necessary line authority for implementation. Bond and Lindsey (1982) and Bicklen (1985) identified the principal as the key to success for providing adequate services for special education students. In a survey conducted with elementary teachers, Bond and Lindsey (1982) reported that few principals

served on placement committees. They urged principals to have more direct involvement by conducting more classroom observations, taking a closer look at scheduling practices, acquainting their teachers with Public Law 94-142, and by serving on placement committees. Stile, Abernathy and Pettibone (1986) did a follow-up national survey of special education certification. Although there appeared to be little change in training and certification in special education administration over the past five years, they noted that there had been an increase in the number of offices that reported a special education requirement for a general administration credential. Also, they observed a decrease in separate special education administration certification. They concluded that this may be a positive trend, reflecting an increased awareness of the need for special education training for general administrators.

Becker, Bender and Kawabe (1980) conducted a rather extensive two-part survey in southern California with parents of mildly handicapped and severely handicapped children and with service providers. They noted that service providers, including preschools, school districts, hospitals, and clinics, reported that programs were available through their individual facilities, agencies, and schools. They further reported that this information was summarized and available in a Community Resources Handbook. However, parents of children with mild handicaps complained that they needed more information about their specific children and what they can do at home. These parents stated that they had no one to turn to for information, but that the most helpful source of information was the

special education teacher. Becker, Bender and Kawabe (1980) concluded that programs and services did exist, but that a system was lacking for informing parents about what was available. They suggested that pamphlets and brochures could be developed and disseminated on a local basis to publicize available programs.

Roitand Pfohl (1948) believed that written materials presented to parents often were overly technical and filled with jargon. Brantlinger (1987) found in a study of low-income parents of mildly mentally handicapped and learning disabled students that, although parents had given permission for placement and were generally pleased with the programs, they did not have information which allowed them to make informed decisions. Brantlinger suggests (1987) that personal interviews may have been more effective than written communication for those parents with limited literary skills who were not accustomed to communicating through writing.

Shields (1986), a father of a handicapped preschooler, described the loneliness and anxiety experienced by parents when they first learned of their children's limitations. He commented that the help is out there, but it needed to get to the parents. He suggested that schools provide resource lists, sponsor orientation sessions, and assist parents in networking with one another.

Three factors were identified by Witt, Miller, McIntyre and Smith (1984) that contributed to parent satisfaction at being members of multidisciplinary staffings. Parents were positive when they were encouraged to participate, when their opinions were sought, and when enough time was allowed for sharing ideas and concerns. Parents also

seemed encouraged by having large numbers of persons available at staffings. This was interpreted by parents as a sign of interested and concerned school personnel.

In response to a parent questionnaire done in West Virginia (Lombardi, 1986), parents said that they were interested in parent training programs. In rank order, their priorities were as follows: improving their childs' study habits, aiding academic growth, improving their childs' self concept, and managing behavior. A list of 12 categories for parent involvement and participation in the educational programs of their children was prepared by Cone, Delawyer and Wolfe (1985). Generally, high participation occurs in teacher contact, involvement in the special education process, and in transportation. The lowest areas of participation were in classroom volunteering, in advocacy involvement, and in the dissemination of information.

Dissemination Strategies

It appeared that both parents and professionals agreed there was a need for disseminating information to parents regarding their children and the special programs or services available to them. A multi-media approach could have been considered when presenting material of a complex nature to a diverse audience. Following is a discussion of major strategies used in dispensing information, including newsletters, personal publishing, exhibits, and audio visual presentations.

Newsletters are a popular form for disseminating information. Sandler (1986) described four different computer packages that can be used for creating newsletters. Examples based on the Newsroom, Print

Shop, MacPublisher, and Ready-Set-Go were discussed by seven different users. The advantages outlined by these programs were that they allowed for increased creativity and productivity as well as being inexpensive. Personal publishing need not be limited to newsletters. Business cards, signs, greeting cards, flyers, and stationery can also be creatively designed by using these systems.

Antonoff (1986) suggested that persons will pay more attention to printed presentations if there is a mix of print styles, if graphics are employed, and if the end product appears as if it had been typeset. Brown (1985) agreed that providing a quality product was of utmost importance. Font changes, double underlining, boldfacing, and italicizing could have been used creatively to present an attractive, professional-looking document. Brown stated that the result of combining wordprocessing programs and desktop publishing programs was that paper communication will be read faster and the messages will be retained longer. The more sophisticated in-house printing became, the more people found uses for their equipment and software. Leaflets, memos, routing slips, invitations, flyers, certificates of recognition, and brochures were among the many means of increasing communication (Fredericks, 1987).

Brown (1985) emphasized how developing a newletter could be profitable. In order to be competitive a newsletter must have a sufficient audience. It should be unique as well as interesting. A newsletter was a good way for sharing worthwhile information with others. Including a section for readers to exchange information or swap ideas was considered helpful.

Another way of presenting information quickly and convincingly, according to Swedmark (1979), was by placing an exhibit in a high-traffic area. Display cases, libraries, school cafeterias, and school board headquarters were cited as heavy-flow areas. Guidelines for effective exhibits included minimizing the amount of reading required, using color for emphasis, and having each exhibit contain only one primary theme or purpose.

There are many ways of presenting information formally or informally to others. Yager (1984) and Lovece (1984) discussed the use of video presentations for information dissemination. Yager (1984) reported that one family out of four owns a video-recorder system. Lovece (1984) observed that in 1983 more than four million people in the United States bought video-cassette recorders. Uhlig and Feldman (1985) claimed that interactive video as an instructional tool has had a strong impact on all levels of education.

Using the technique of brainstorming along with research references, an alphabetical compilation of activities for presenting information is found in Appendix A.

Summary

Almost 15 years after the implementation of Public Law 94-142, educators nationally have been concerned about the large numbers of students being identified as handicapped and given direct service outside of regular education. Consultation models and strategies have been recognized as effective alternatives to the Direct Service model. The literature often included prereferral strategies under the umbrella of consultation services.

The keys to effective consultation are open and consistent communication between regular and special education teachers with the support of the administration which, at the grass roots level, is the building principal. The special educator often had the expertise but not the authority to implement appropriate changes, whereas the building principal had the authority and responsibility but lacked the training and skills for effective implementation.

Both parents and professionals seemed to agree that services were available, but that parents were not always aware of these services. Parents seemed to rely on the special education teacher to get the information they wanted, whereas educators relied more on the written word for disseminating information. When using a multi-media approach, however, the means for disseminating information seemed limitless.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

The general goals of the practicum were to enhance and to promote the special education delivery system by creating and refining communication between special educators and teachers, parents, and principals at the elementary level through the development and implementation of consultation strategies. The following goals were projected for this practicum.

Specific Objectives

New Teachers

Behavior: Selection of alternatives prior to referral

Standard: Minimum of two alternatives

Instrument: Checklist of Alternatives (See Appendix C)

Prior to having a student tested, the teacher completed a check sheet of intervention options she had sought before pursuing a referral. This check sheet was submitted with the referral. The selection of two options was considered the minimum to meet the requirements. The selection of more than two alternatives indicated that the teacher was breaking from the refer-test-place cycle and using other available resources.

Elementary Building Principals

Behavior: Active participation in referral process

Standard: 100% compliance

Instrument: Prereferral checklist with guidelines (See Appendix D)

When a teacher requested a testing referral, the principal, as part of the case conference team, was responsible 100 percent of the time for two main actions: checking records, and making a classroom observation. Guidelines were offered to aid in this responsibility, but the principals were not limited or restricted to these suggestions. A review of the checksheets showed that the records had been checked and that a classroom observation had been made. Active participation in these two tasks increased the principal's effectiveness as a member of the case conference committee. As a result of this participation, the principal was qualified to sign the Learning Disabilities Eligibility form if and when it were applicable (See Appendix A).

Auxiliary Staff

Behavior: Active participation in two-way communication with special education staff

Standard: 3 out of every 4 Data Sheets given to an auxiliary teacher were to be returned to the special education teacher

Instrument: New Student Data Sheet (See Appendix E)

Each auxiliary teacher was informed in writing by the resource room teacher when a new special education transfer student had enrolled. Teachers were asked to acknowledge receipt of this memo by marking the correct space at the bottom of the New Student Data Sheet

and returning it to the special educator. By marking the appropriate space, auxiliary teachers had the opportunity to request a consultation conference if they had any concerns about the student or his or her mainstreamed program. If the auxiliary teacher did not perceive a problem, she was asked to check the appropriate place on the Data Sheet and return it to the special educator.

In order to be assured that two-way communication was taking place, it was expected that the auxiliary teachers would return a minimum of 3 out of 4 of the Data Sheets to the special education teachers, acknowledging that they had received a new special education student. Anything less than this suggested that the information was perceived as having little value and that the communication was unnecessary.

Parents I

Behavior: Increased awareness of services

Standard: Responding parents reported increased awareness by marking a minimum of 2 out of 10 items on the Checklist

Instrument: Handbook Evaluation Checklist (See Appendix F)

Information about available services within the school community were presented in written form to parents of handicapped students. After reviewing the information, the parents were asked to complete a checklist (see Appendix F) which covered the topics presented. Responses made by the parents indicated that they were more informed about services available after reviewing the information than they had been prior to having the information presented. Information was

disseminated at Open House in the Fall, at initial case conferences, and at annual case reviews. At the beginning of second semester, handbooks were also sent home with students of parents who had not responded previously.

Parents II

Behavior: Increased awareness of services

Standard: Minimum of 10 accurate responses on Transition Quiz

Instrument: Junior High Transition Quiz
(See Appendix G)

Information about the Junior High School program was presented in a video tape to parents and handicapped students who were making the transition from sixth grade into Junior High school. As part of the Annual Case Review, the parents and students previewed the tape and went over a true-false Transition Quiz (See Appendix G) with the case conference coordinator.

Evaluation Instruments

Prereferral Checklist of Alternatives (Appendix C)

Before receiving a referral for testing, each teacher completed a checklist of intervention options that were pursued prior to the request. Seventeen items ranging from a record search to consultaion with various support staff were on the checklist. The selection of two options was regarded as the minimum for meeting the requirements of the Practicum. The selection of more than two alternatives indicated that the teacher was breaking from the refer-test-place cycle and using other resources available.

Principal Prereferral Checklist and Guide (Appendix D)

It was expected that, when a testing referral was requested from

the principal, he would become actively involved in the diagnostic process by checking records and making a classroom observation. A review of the checklist showed that in each case the principal had completed both of these tasks. Although the quality of the performance varied with individual principals, the requirements were met when each principal performed both the task of record checking and classroom observation for each referral. Any standard less than 100 percent compliance was not considered acceptable and, on the contrary, suggested that the building principal was not taking his share of responsibility as an active member of the case conference committee.

New Student Data Sheet (Appendix E)

Each auxiliary teacher received a Data Sheet on each new special education student. In order to affirm that two-way communication was being established between auxiliary staff and special educators, the teacher was expected to acknowledge receipt of this information 3 out 4 times. This was done when the teacher marked the appropriate space/spaces at the bottom of the form and returned the form to the special educator. Any return rate less than 3 out of 4 indicated that two-way communication had not been accomplished.

Handbook Evaluation Checklist (Appendix F)

All parents of handicapped students were given a brochure and a checklist of 9 items which reviewed the topics of information in the handout. They received these items at either the Fall Open House or at the initial Case Conference. For those who did not respond, another brochure and checklist were sent home when their child hand-carried the items to them. A final opportunity for disseminating

these materials was at the Annual Case Review.

Minimum requirements were met if each responding parent marked a minimum of 2 of the 9 items. This acknowledged that, after reading the information, the parents were then more aware of services than they had been prior to reading the information.

Transition Quiz (Appendix G)

After previewing a video tape, as part of the case conference process, it was expected that students and their parents, working with the case conference coordinator, would respond in the affirmative a minimum of 10 times out of 15 on a true-false Transition Quiz. Less than 10 items scored correctly suggested that the method of dissemination was not effective and needed to be revised or discarded. Any items marked in the negative were discussed during the Annual Case Review.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Solutions Previously Attempted

Testing for placement in direct service programs has mushroomed nationally since the implementation over a decade ago of Public Law 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) (Will, 1984). Special educators across the nation have initiated prereferral strategies (Graden, Casey & Christenson, 1985) and school psychologists have promoted consultation models (Barbrack, 1980; Alpert & Trachtman, 1980).

Both prereferrals and consultation services spoke to the issue of providing appropriate but indirect service within the concept of a least restrictive environment. The major goals of prereferral interventions were to reduce inappropriate referrals which would consequently reduce inappropriate placements (Graden, Casey & Christenson, 1985). The prereferral intervention process was the basis for a consultation approach to a service delivery model, according to Stewart (1986) and Graden, Casey & Christenson (1985).

Reynolds, Wang and Walberg (1987) advocated adaptive education for all students, not just the handicapped. Some State programs such as Indiana's Comprehensive Assessment and Program Planning System (CAPPS), and the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) programs were forerunners to this concept. The CAPPS program

lasted from 1978 through 1981, but never moved from diagnostics to remediation before it was abolished. The present emphasis of the ISTEP program is on measuring student achievement with the ultimate political purpose of increasing the school year in order to provide remediation for the non-handicapped student. This program went into effect in the beginning of the 1987-88 school year. District-wide screening was discussed by Kellogg (1984) and Mills (1979) as a means of eliminating referrals that did not lead to special education placement. The Practicum School District has looked to the State Department for leadership and considered the implementation of a district-wide screening program to unnecessarily duplicate the mandated ISTEP program.

During the 1975-76 school year, the Practicum School System initiated an individual screening process that had acted as a prereferral strategy. When it was first implemented, referrals for testing were greatly reduced. The present system allows the teacher the option for either screening or testing. Interim steps, including active participation on the part of the building principals, were interjected so that teachers would not select screening as the only alternative for seeking assistance.

Effective consultation services were those supported by the building administrator (Wang, Vaughn & Dytman, 1985) and, yet, prinicpals often were excluded from or not included in the referral process (Gartner, 1986) nor have they served on placement committees (Bond & Lindsey, 1982).

Positive teacher involvement with administrative support had been

the key to successful consultation programs (Biklen, 1985). Swedmark (1979), Dalke (1984), and Wang, Vaughn, and Dytman (1985) saw the importance of systematic two-way communication between regular teachers and special educators, with the latter supplying appropriate information to the mainstream teacher. In the Practicum School System, the itinerant auxiliary staff have been very autonomous. There has been little effort at any level to encourage their participation with other staff members in any systematic way.

Parents of handicapped students living in the Practicum School System have always been part of the case conference process. Some families were transient for economic reasons and others continued to "shop" for services and programs that fit their personal philosophy of education. Although researchers questioned the effectiveness of the printed word for communication with parents (Brantlinger 1987; Roit & Pfohl, 1984; and Becker, Bender & Kawabe, 1980), the word-of-mouth communication that had served the Practicum community in the past was no longer efficient or reliable. Therefore, an explicit form of information dissemination needed to be made available. However, in trying not to lose the small town camaraderie, less formal methods of communicating were also sought. Sandler (1986), Antonoff (1986), Fredericks (1987), and Brown (1985) discussed the many different ways of inexpensively producing a quality newsletter. The local Cooperative which serves the low incidence handicapped population for the Practicum community had a newsletter; consequently, a second newletter seemed redundant. A formal policy handbook was eliminated because one had been revised for regular education at the High School in 1985 and a

second one was being prepared for dissemination at the Junior High School for the beginning of the 1987 school year.

Justification of Solution Strategies

The Practicum School System, like the nation at large, in trying to comply with Public Law 94-142, found that much time and energy was spent in dealing with inappropriate referrals when resources could be better used by developing consultation strategies which would de-emphasize direct service (Biklen, Bender & Kawabe, 1980; Ganschow, Weber, & Davis, 1984; Gartner, 1986; Graden, Casey & Christenson, 1985; Haight, 1984; Kellogg, 1984; and White & Calhoun, 1987).

Although the principal commonly was identified as the key person for supporting all programs in any given building, he often had little knowledge or expertise in carrying out this function in relationship to special needs students (Howze, 1986; Klopf, 1979; Bond & Lindsey, 1982; Cheek & Lindsey, 1986; Haight, 1984; Stile & Pettibone, 1986; and Wang, Vaughn & Dytman, 1985). Therefore, the building principals needed to be educated so that they could be active participants in the total process. This included referral to placement with all the intermediate consultation activities.

Regular teachers usually were not formally trained to work with handicapped students. It was the concensus of many, however, that by building a support system through open, systematic communication between regular and special educators, regular teachers could be successful with mildly handicapped students within the mainstreamed environment. Regular teachers, when working with mildly handicapped students, seemed to prefer systematic, two-way communication concerning

individuals rather than large group inservice sessions (Dalke, 1984; Raiser, 1987; Sesow & Adams, 1982; Swedmark, 1979; and Wang, Vaughan & Dytman, 1985).

During the 1985-86 school year the local Parent-Teachers organization for the Practicum School System purchased a VHS recorder and monitor for each of the four elementary schools. The system already owned two cameras. Because of the universal popularity of VCR's (Yager, 1984; Lovece, 1984), and because of the unlimited opportunities the VCR has had for impacting on education (Uhlig & Feldman, 1985), and because of materials available which were purchased by the community for the schools,the Practicum Coordinator decided to use the VCR as one way for disseminating information to parents.

In order to communicate the special education philosophy of the Practicum School System to a community that had undergone a population shift, there appeared to be a real need to have this information in writing. Despite some disagreement as to the effectiveness of written material presented to parents (Brantlinger, 1987; Roit & Pfohl, 1984; and Becker, Bender & Kawabe, 1980), the special education staff, some auxiliary staff members, and the Superintendent of Schools of the Practicum School System agreed that a brochure of information would be very beneficial to the school personnel as well as to the community at large.

Description of Action Taken

Material Preparation

Consultation materials needed for implementation were prepared in advance. Appendices B-G were taken to the typist and completed prior

to the preschool meetings. This advance preparation proved most beneficial in that the secretary became ill the second week of school and was hospitalized. Regular secretarial services were not available for a five-week period.

In order to reduce the number of unnecessary referrals and still be a support service for teachers and students, a checklist of alternatives was developed by the Practicum Coordinator and the special education staff. A sample was given to four teachers who had made referrals in the past and to four teachers who had never made a referral. Total input generated a checklist of 17 items (see Appendix C).

On occasion, a referral for testing had been requested, only to find that the student had been tested prior to moving into the Practicum School District. By mandate, a student observation must be made as part of the diagnostic procedure prior to placement. Building principals were asked to be responsible for these two tasks, requesting records and making a classroom observation. In order to assist them with these two assignments, a checklist with guidelines was developed (see Appendix D).

In order to be efficient and consistent in informing auxiliary staff about new transfer students enrolling into the Practicum School District, a form was developed (see Appendix E). By alerting the auxiliary staff to special circumstances of individual students, the special education staff opened communications with the regular teachers, which made for a smooth transition for the incoming student.

After the second sheet was returned, it was realized that there

was no place for signature on the bottom half or return portion of the form. Consequently, the special teacher wrote the name on the bottom of the form. A place for signature will need to be added as implementation continues.

In order to inform parents and teachers of the rights of the handicapped and of the services provided to them through the Practicum School District, a brochure or handbook was developed. A 9-item Evaluation Checklist was prepared to determine the effectiveness of the handout (see Appendix F).

Mildly handicapped Junior High School students and their teacher identified nine areas of concern students had upon entering the Junior High School. They video taped a discussion session which spoke to these issues. A 15-item checklist was prepared which served as a mechanism in the case conference to check parent understanding of the program and of student concerns (Appendix G). After viewing the tape, parents were better informed about program expectations and normal student behavior.

Administration Meeting

Initially, when the practicum was in the proposal stage, approval for the project was sought and obtained from the assistant superintendent of schools. However, before the fall implementation date, the assistant superintendent became superintendent and a new assistant was hired. During the first six weeks of school, the Practicum Coordinator met with the four building principals, the superintendent of schools, and the new assistant superintendent. General goals and specific objectives of the Practicum were discussed.

Participants received copies of Appendices C-G. Because the principals were directly responsible for implementation, the Teacher/Principal Prereferral Checklist (Appendix C) and the Principal Prereferral Checklist and Guide (Appendix D) were thoroughly reviewed.

Monthly Follow-Through Meetings: Building Principals

Individual conferences with each of the four building principals were held on a monthly basis, October through April, or on request as needed. The Practicum Coordinator acted as the support person for the building principal as he started implementing the objectives of the Practicum as they related to the teachers and students in his building.

During the October meeting, the principal from Building #1 turned in a referral with both Appendices B and C attached. The principals from Buildings #2 and #4 did not have any referrals. However, the principal from Building #4 stated that four students were being screened. The principal from Building #3 asked for assistance and was guided through the Teacher/Principal Prereferral Checklist (Appendix C) and the Principal Prereferral Checklist and Guide (Appendix D).

During the November meeting the principal for Building #3 turned in the referral with the attached forms. He also requested that two students be screened. The principal from Building #4 reported that one student had moved and, as a result of prereferral activities, 3 students would not be referred for testing. One of the November screenings from Building #3 culminated in a testing referral in December. There were no referrals for testing submitted in January or February. In March a student from Building #3 was recommended for screening. This referral led to testing and placement.

As students were referred for testing, the principal collected the Teacher/Principal Prereferral Checklist (Appendix C) from the teacher. This and the Principal Prereferral Checklist and Guide (Appendix D) were submitted to the Practicum Coordinator. The data were collected throughout the school year. Data analysis took place in April, at the end of the Practicum.

Preschool Inservice: All Elementary Teachers

An overview of Practicum objectives was presented to all elementary teachers so that they were informed about modifications that were made in the referral process. They were given copies of the Prereferral Checklist and the Principal Prereferral Checklist and Guide. Extra copies of these two checklists were given to the principals, whose responsibility was to disseminate them as needed.

Because teachers had copies of the prereferral checklist, one could not know how many teachers considered testing, but did not pursue it because prereferral activities were sufficient. One could only look at the number of referrals that culminated into placement to determine the success of this intervention. If a school system wanted to duplicate this procedure and research the success or failure of the process, they would need to compare the number of original requests for referrals which did not come to fruition because alternatives were successful. The number of Checklists requested would be compared to the number of referrals that resulted in testing being initiated. Next they would want to determine how many of the actual referrals led to placement. The purpose of the Practicum, however, was not only to decrease referrals, but to increase the use of options other than

testing.

Preschool Inservice: Auxiliary and Special Education Staff

When the proposal was initiated, the Practicum School District had two art teachers, one music teacher and three physical education teachers who provided services to the four elementary schools. During the summer, prior to implementation, one art teacher left the system. Her responsibilities were absorbed by the remaining art teacher. Also, during the summer, prior to implementation, the music teacher left and a new teacher was hired. The three physical education teachers remained the same.

The new process for implementation was explained by going over the New Data Sheet (Appendix E) with the individual auxiliary staff members.

Follow-Through Meetings: Auxiliary Staff

During the first six weeks of school, the Practicum Coordinator met with the auxiliary staff individually to insure proper implementation. Following the preschool inservice and the individual encounters, the responsibilities shifted from the Practicum Coordinator to the appropriate special education teacher.

The music teacher who taught in all four elementary buildings was new to the system. Consequently, she expected Data Sheets on all special education students, not just the newly enrolled. As new students enrolled or new students were identified for service throughout the school year, the special education teachers contacted the auxiliary staff using the New Student Data Sheet (Appendix E).

Follow-Through Meetings: Special Education Staff

The Practicum Coordinator met monthly, September through April, with the special education staff to collect data from this ongoing process. Responses to the New Student Data Sheet were collected and data analysis took place at the end of the Practicum.

Handbook Preparation and Dissemination

With the assistance of the special education staff, the Practicum Coordinator developed an information Brochure or Handbook for parents. The Practicum Coordinator worked with the year book advisor, who assisted with general layout and in getting the copy ready for print. The special education staff edited the material before it was submitted to the Superintendent for final approval. In order to stay within budget, one page of the original document was deleted. The section on Child Find was eliminated; the rationale was that the Brochure was available primarily to parents of students already identified as handicapped. The Brochures and Evaluation Checklists (Appendix G) were first disseminated at Open House at each elementary building. The Brochures and Checklists then were presented at each initial Case Confefence or Annual Case Review until all parents of handicapped students had a copy. The Handbooks continued to be available as students entered the program. The Handbooks and Evaluation Checklists also were given to new teachers in the Practicum School District. Data were collected at Open House and after each conference. Data analysis took place at the completion of the Practicum.

Video Taping

Mildly handicapped students who came into the Junior High School

for the first time had many concerns including getting lost, not being able to get their lockers open, and being late for classes. Parents often wondered how their children, who had difficulty in elementary school, would be able to function in a junior high school setting. The Practicum Coordinator decided to use current handicapped students to video tape a presentation for incoming students and their parents.

Using a VHS recorder, Junior High resource room students taped a practice segment so that they could have some experience in front of the camera. They had a discussion, led by the teacher, on how they spent their free time on weekends. This topic did not generate much enthusiasm. The teacher went directly into a discussion about some of the concerns the students had about starting Junior High School. The students and their teacher then previewed the tape so that they could critique their own performance as it related to eye contact with the camera, voice control, general mannerisms, and content.

In the summer of 1987, prior to the implementation of the practicum, the Junior High School special education teacher moved and a new teacher was hired. When the proposal was first written, the special education teacher who was going to do the implementing, had been with the Practicum School System for six years. She was familiar with the problems that students encountered as they entered the new program and she was knowledgeable about the policies and the practices of the school district in general and of the Department of Special Education in particular. Although the new teacher was at a disadvantage, she was able to lead a video-taped discussion directed to parents about problems students have in making the transition from

elementary to junior high school. The Practicum Coordinator and the elementary special education teacher previewed the tape for content. This was done twice with the final result being a 20-minute presentation

Tape Presentations: Annual Case Reviews

The tape presentation was part of the Annual Case Review process for sixth grade students who entered the Junior High School in the fall. The students and parents viewed the film with the Practicum Coordinator and then followed through with the regular case conference, which included the teacher they had just viewed on the tape and a building administrator. Developing the film and the Transition Quiz (Appendix G) was a group project. The aim was to clarify any questions either the parents or the students may have had about the program. The conferences were originally planned to begin in March and end in April. However, because of the program, ISTEP, the conferences began in February and were completed in March. Data were collected at the end of each conference. Data analysis took place after all the sixth grade Annual Case Reviews had been held.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DISSEMINATION PLANS

Results of General Goals

The general goals of the Practicum were to enhance and to promote the special education delivery system by creating and refining communication between special educators and teachers, parents, and principals at the elementary level. This was accomplished by the successful development and implementation of consultation strategies as discussed below.

Results of Specific Objectives

New Teachers

Behavior: Selection of alternatives prior to referral

Standard: Minimum of two alternatives

Results: Goal was met

The selection of more than two alternatives from the Checklist of Alternatives indicated that the referring teachers were breaking from the traditional refer-test-place cycle and were using other available resources. Three alternatives were considered before Referral #1 was submitted for testing; six alternatives were considered before Referral #2 was submitted; nine alternatives were considered before Referral #3 was submitted; and five alternatives were considered before Referral #4 was submitted. Only four new referrals for the 1987-1988 school year were submitted for testing; all four referrals culminated in

appropriate special education placement.

Discussion of Positive Unexpected Results

Screening was one option or alternative prior to testing. During the 1985-1986 school year there had been 22 screening referrals and 9 testing referrals; none of these led to placement. During the 1986-1987 school year there had been 15 screening referrals and 6 testing referrals; 3 of these led to placement. During the implementation year, 1987-1988, there were 7 screening referrals and 4 testing referrals; the four testing referrals led to placement. Although it was expected that testing referrals would be reduced, this decrease in both testing and screening seemed significant.

Elementary Building Principals

Behavior: Active participation in referral process

Standard: 100% compliance

Results: Goal was met

It was expected that each principal, as part of the case conference committee, would be responsible for two activities, checking records and making a classroom observation. These actions were completed 100 per cent of the time. Documentation was submitted with each testing referral.

Four referrals led to placement; one to a class for multiply handicapped, one to a class for emotionally handicapped, and two were assigned to learning disabilities programs. The principal in each learning disability placement was able to sign the Eligibility Form (Appendix A).

Discussion of Positive Unexpected Results

Principals became involved at the screening stage. Although observations were not required for screening, principals, 100 per cent of the time, made classroom observations.

Auxiliary Staff

Behavior: Active participation in two-way communication with special education staff

Standard: 3 out of every 4 Data Sheets given to an auxiliary teacher were returned to the special education teacher

Results: Goal was met

When new mildly handicapped students enrolled in the Practicum School District, the auxiliary staff were given pertinent information about these students (Appendix E). The art teacher and two physical education teachers acknowledged all Data Sheets; one physical education teacher did not have any new students. The new music teacher had to be reminded, but then responded to all but the first two.

Discussion of Positive Unexpected Results

One physical education teacher made positive comments on the behavior of three of the four students. These comments were shared with parents at the annual case reviews. The music teacher requested to see the file on one student and asked for further information regarding medication on a second student. These interactions suggested that the experiencewas truly meaningful and not merely an exercise in increasing communication.

Data sheets were also developed and distributed on students already in the school system who had gone through the testing process

and, as a result, were assigned to special education programs.

The new music teacher expected Data Sheets on all handicapped students in the program, not merely the new students to the District or those identified during the school year. The Practicum Coordinator made special arrangements and reviewed this information with the new teacher.

Discussion of Negative Unexpected Results

The auxiliary teachers were asked to return the bottom part of the Data Sheet, but there was no place on the form for their signature. Consequently, when the first Data Sheet was returned by two teachers, there was no way of knowing if the Data Sheet had been received by the art, the music, or the physical education teacher. The Practicum Coordinator had to follow up on the first two. After that, the special education teachers wrote the regular teacher's name on the top of the form.

Parents I

Behavior: Increased awareness of services

Standard: Responding parents report minimum of two items

Results: Goal was met 23 out of 25 times

The selection of more than two responses from the Handbook Evaluation Checklist indicated that parents were more informed about services available to them than they had been prior to reviewing the Brochure. Of the responding 25 parents, 23 marked a range of 2 to 9 responses. Two parents, both of whom had been in the school system more than five years each, reported that they were aware of all the information contained in the Brochure.

Discussion of Positive Unexpected Results

During the 1987-1988 school year, the Practicum School System hired seven new teachers at the elementary level. Each new teacher was given a copy of the Brochure and a Handbook Evaluation Checklist. Responses indicated that teachers new to the school system were not aware of special education services that were available within the school system nor of the rights of the handicapped in general.

One member of the local school board and the Director of Guidance from the High School sent informal notes to the Practicum Coordinator. Acknowledgment of a job well done by superiors and peers is certainly a positive reinforcer.

One parent commented that, although she had known about the items in the Handbook, this was the first time that she had seen them in writing.

Discussion of Negative Unexpected Results

Only 25 of the 35 parents returned their Evaluation Sheets even though they were given a minimum of two separate opportunities. Although a 100 per cent return was not expected, it was hoped for. The 71 per cent return may reflect the changing community.

Parents II

Behavior: Increased awareness of services

Standard: Minimum of 10 accurate responses on Transition Quiz

Results: Goal was met

The viewing of a 20-minute video tape preceded the Annual Case Reviews for six students who were being case conferenced into the Junior High School special education program. Students and parents,

in a discussion led by the Practicum Coordinator, responded accurately to all questions on the Transition Quiz. Most of the conference time was then spent on individual schedules.

Discussion of Positive Unexpected Results

Because the video was comprehensive, addressing typical concerns and questions, most of the actual conference time was spent on individual scheduling and other administrative details. This seemed to be a more efficient use of the time of the school personnel.

After viewing herself on tape, the special education teacher went on a diet and lost 10 pounds. This was certainly an unexpected and, by her admission, a positive result of this section of the Practicum.

Recommendations to Improve Implementation

Teacher Information Packets should be assembled and presented individually to new teachers as they enter the school system. Each packet should contain the following: 1) a Checklist of Alternatives, 2) a testing referral form, 3) a Special Education Brochure, and 4) Data Sheets on all special education students assigned to them.

Although auxiliary teachers may return Data Sheets, it should not be required that they do so. If more information is wanted, or assistance is requested, the Data Sheet can be used for this request. However, the present form will need to be revised so that there is a place for the returning teacher's name.

Plans for Dissemination

1. "Prereferral Checklists for Principals and Teachers" has been accepted for publication in the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP) Directory of Alternative Service Delivery Models, Expanded edition. Expected publication date is late 1988 or early 1989.
2. "The Special Education Initiative and the Building Principal" has been submitted as a presentation for the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) 67th Annual Convention being held in San Francisco, CA. in April 1989.
3. The Parent Handbook will be widely distributed within the Practicum School District to parents of both regular and special education students in grades K-12.

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APPENDIX A

LEARNING DISABILITIES REPORT OF ELIGIBILITY

Learning Disabilities

Report of Eligibility

_____

Student's Name

_____

Date

On the basis of a multidisciplinary team evaluation, it is our conclusion that the above-named child has a learning disability. Our conclusions are based on the findings contained within the attached evaluation. The evaluation includes the relevant behavior noted during the observation of the child; the relationship of that behavior to the child's academic functioning; the educationally relevant medical findings, if any; whether there is a severe discrepancy between achievement and ability which is not correctable without special education and related services; and the determination of the effects of environmental, cultural, or economic factors.

Name	Position
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

If the above report does not reflect an individual team member's conclusion, the team member must submit a separate statement presenting his/her conclusions.

APPENDIX B

DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES

_____ Books
_____ Brochures
_____ Business Cards
_____ Certificates of Recognition
_____ Charts
_____ Child-Made Materials
_____ Displays
_____ Exhibits
_____ Films
_____ Film Strips
_____ Flyers
_____ Graphs
_____ Greeting Cards
_____ Guides
_____ Handbooks
_____ Handouts
_____ Invitations
_____ Lectures
_____ Letters
_____ Lists
_____ Manuals
_____ Memos
_____ Newsletters
_____ Newspapers
_____ Outlines
_____ Overheads
_____ Packets
_____ Pictures
_____ Posters
_____ Reports
_____ Routing Slips
_____ Slides
_____ Stationery
_____ Teacher Made Materials
_____ TV Spots
_____ Video Tapes

APPENDIX C

TEACHER/PRINCIPAL
PREREFERRAL CHECKLIST

Teacher_____ School _____

Principal_____ Grade _____

Student_____ DOB _____

Please indicate what action you have taken prior to requesting a referral for psychometric screening or testing. This information will transfer to Page 2 of the testing referral. Thank You.

_____ Checked school records

_____ Conferred with child's previous teacher

_____ Formal Consultation with School Psychologist

_____ Had Hearing Screened: Speech Pathologist

_____ Had Vision Screened: School Nurse

_____ Informal consultation with LD Teacher

_____ Made assignment adjustments (explain)

_____ Made classroom modifications (explain)

_____ Referred to outside agency: Big Brothers, Scouts

_____ Referred to outside professional: Neurologist, Optom.

_____ Reported to School Nurse

_____ Requested assistance from Principal

_____ Requested assistance from Reading Teacher

_____ Requested records

_____ Talked with parents

_____ Talked with Speech Pathologist

_____ Took some direct action with student (explain)

APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL
PREREFERRAL CHECKLIST AND GUIDE

Before approving a referral for testing, records should be checked and a classroom observation should be made. Listed below are guidelines that may assist in this procedure. Please turn in this completed check list with the referral for testing.

_____ 1. CHECK SCHOOL RECORDS*

- _____ Request Records
- _____ Has student been tested previously
  - _____ Psychometric
  - _____ Hearing/Vision
  - _____ Physical
  - _____ Other
- _____ Phone contact with previous school

_____ 2. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS
(Please comment where appropriate)

- _____ Desk: Placement and Size
- _____ Harmon Distance
- _____ Physical Environment: Light-Temp-Sound
- _____ Peer Interaction
- _____ Teacher-Student Interaction

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

* If a student has been tested previously and has not been placed, a testing referral is probably inappropriate. A student should not be referred for testing until records have been obtained. A minimum of 3 weeks adjustment period should be allowed before any new student is considered for testing.

APPENDIX E

NEW STUDENT DATA SHEET

To:___ Art
___ Music
___ PE

From: Special Education

_____
Date

_____
Name

Please welcome this new student into your program.

NAME _____ Previous Schools_____

GRADE _____ _____

TEACHER _____ _____

_____

Family Unit_____

_____

Medical-Perceptual-Behavioral Info._____

_____

_____

_____

- - - - - - - - - - - **Please complete this section** - - - - - - - - - - -
- - - - - - - - - - - **and return it to special education** - - - - - - - - -

Do you have any specific questions or concerns at this time?
_____ Yes _____ No

Would a conference be helpful at this time?
_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, with whom would you like to meet? _____school nurse

_____ regular teacher _____ special ed teacher

_____ other _____ speech therapist _____ school psych

If yes, when would be a good time for you?_____

_____

HANDBOOK EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The Special Education Handbook was written so that teachers and parents could be better informed about special education services available in the School Town of _____. Teachers, please complete the questionnaire and return it to the mailbox of Mrs._____. Parents, please complete the questionnaire and return it to your child's teacher. Thank you.

Please check the items that you now know about after reading the handbook. Leave space blank, if you had known about the item before seeing the handbook.

_____ I now know about Public Law 94-142.

_____ I now know about our connection with W____ _____ _____ _____.

_____ I now know about Project Child Find.

_____ I now know that we have direct services through high school.

_____ I now know about our affiliation with the ___ _____ vocational program.

_____ I now know what is meant by the expression, "least restrictive environment."

_____ I now know about the extensive services offered at _____ Elementary School.

_____ I now know that each school offers learning disabilities and speech programs.

_____ I now know about the various support and advocacy organizations that I can join.

APPENDIX G

JUNIOR HIGH TRANSITION QUIZ

True	False	
____	____	The Resource Room is available for instruction 1, 2, or 3 periods daily.
____	____	Math and/or Language Arts are the basic skills taught in the Resource Room.
____	____	Many students are late to classes the first week of school because they get lost or can not get their lockers open.
____	____	Teachers will help all students with their lockers during the first few weeks of school.
____	____	Students will NOT be punished if they are late to classes the first few weeks of school.
____	____	Resource students can be graded competitively in some subjects, if this is agreed to by the members of the case conference committee.
____	____	Resource students are responsible for doing their homework.
____	____	Resource students are responsible for getting their work in on time.
____	____	Resource students' grades can be adjusted or modified if this is agreed to by the case conference committee.
____	____	Resource students are expected to abide by all the school rules and by the general code of conduct.
____	____	If Resource students choose to break the rules, they are subject to the same consequences as regular students.
____	____	The counseling office is available to all students.
____	____	Smoke-ups are a WARNING that a student is not passing a class.
____	____	A smoke-up is given so that a student has a chance, by working hard, to raise a grade.

____ ____ The Resource teacher requests 3-week reports from the regular teachers to check student progress.